



Container Plants

By Joanne Dudley, UC Master Gardener

WHAT MAKES CONTAINER PLANTS CHARMING?

- * They create instant beauty any place, on a moment's notice.
- * You can create the environment in which they thrive.
- * They can extend your garden vertically.
- * They can be grouped to provide dramatic interest where needed.
- * They can be arranged in a part of your yard which has less than desirable growing conditions.
- * They can be moved wherever they are needed (to hide ugly...to decorate a table)
- * They can be used to create beauty in flower beds when bedded plants have passed their prime.
- * They can turn a stark area into an oasis.
- * They can allow your creativity to run wild as you combine colors, textures, and sizes.
- * Warning!! They are addictive.

WHAT DO CONTAINER PLANTS NEED TO THRIVE?

- * They need good drainage provided by appropriate planting mix and at least one unclogged pot hole.
- * They need to have their moisture level monitored.
- * They have to be fed regularly.
- * Their roots must have sufficient space.
- * They thrive best when all the plants in the same container have similar needs: water, soil, and shade/sun.
- * They need containers raised above ground/pavement to allow for air circulation and to keep roots from sitting in water.

10 Favorite Container Plants

Presented by Joanne Dudley, UC Master Gardener of Tulare & Kings



Alyssum *Brassicaceae*

This fragrant garden favorite produces masses of blooms. It grows into a four inch high carpet of flowers which spill over the edges of the container with white to lavender blooms. It grows in sun to light shade and requires moderate water. It attracts butterflies.



Lobelia *Campanulaceae*

Annual lobelias are low plants which add magic to hanging baskets and containers with their deep blue flowers. Lobelia like rich soil, regular water and need some shade in hot climates.



Calibrachoa, Million Bells *Solanaceae*

This is a petunia relative with smaller leaves and flowers. Plants are self cleaning. Blooms are produced all season and cascade over baskets and containers. They come in a variety of luscious flower colors and like full sun and regular water.



Impatiens *Balsaminaceae*

These are graceful plants that will brighten the shady spots in the garden. They perform well in baskets and containers and keep on blooming from spring until first frosts of late fall. They come in a variety of lovely colors and need moderate water.



Ivy Geranium *Geraniaceae*

Ivy geraniums come in a variety of colors and trail over their containers. In hot climates, they like some afternoon shade. Geraniums appreciate a moist, well-drained soil.



Sutera (Bacopa) *Scrophulariaceae*

Bacopa is a great plant for hanging baskets and containers. It is an excellent filler in mixed plantings. Bacopa blooms from spring until frost and prefers rich, well-drained soil. It has small white compact blooms which attract butterflies.



Verbena *Verbenaceae*

Verbena thrives in hot climates in sunny locations. It is at home in hanging baskets and other containers. Its tubular flowers come in reds, purples, white and pink and attract butterflies. It requires well drained soil and light to moderate water.



Dahlias *Asteraceae*

Small compact dahlias perform well in containers. Their bright colors liven up any container and work well alone or in combination plantings. In hot climates, dahlias benefit from light shade.



Begonias *Begoniaceae*

The delicate begonia flower comes in many shades of pink and also white. These delicate flowers bring beauty to any basket or container from spring and into the fall if provided with some shade. They like rich, porous moist soil, making them perfect container plants.



Lantana *Verbenaceae*

Lantana is a fast growing evergreen that blooms from April until late fall. It comes in a variety of colors and thrives in our hot, sunny weather. It likes to be pruned hard in spring and requires little to moderate water. It attracts hummingbirds and butterflies. Lantana looks great spilling out of baskets and planters.

SOME FAVORITE ANNUALS FOR CONTAINERS - Sunset's Annuals

Ageratum (floss flower)	Dianthus
Annual grasses	Felicia (Blue Margarita)
Begonia	Gaillardia (blanket flower)
Brachycome (Swan River daisy)	Gazania
Brassica (Flowering cabbage)	Gerbera
Browallia	Helichrysum (Straw flower)
Calceolaria	Iberis (Candy Tuft)
Callistephus (China Aster)	Impatiens
Celosia (cockscomb)	Matthiola (Stock)
Centaurea (Dusty Miller)	Pelargonium (Geranium)
Coleus	Petunia
Coreopsis	Portulaca (Moss Rose)
Cosmos	Marigold
Dahlia	Verbena

REFERENCES

Sunset Annuals ISBN 0-376-03064-X

Sunset Container Gardening ISBN 0-376-03208-1

Containers for Patios ISBN 978-0-7566-1714-1

Gardening in Small Spaces ISBN 1-56158-580-7

The Best of Fine Gardening: Container Gardening, the Taunton Press, Spring-Summer, 2004,
www.finegardening.com



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